

1. IRAN: IMPACT OF THE TABAS RAID 112
JH
Rescue

The failure of the US rescue effort will strengthen enormously the Iranian resolve to resist "imperialism." It virtually guarantees that no Iranian politician can support a negotiated settlement when (and if) the hostage issue is debated in the legislature. Although the hostages probably will not be harmed because of our actions, at least some will probably now be held in dispersed locations.

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In gloating over the aborted mission, Tehran radio has stressed two themes:

- the mission failed because God directly intervened; and
- the Revolution has a divine guardian and cannot be destroyed by an earthly force.

In a brief statement, Ayatollah Khomeini claimed that the US still failed to understand the Revolution and that the people would resist US pressure "with their blood."

The militants will not be inclined to kill the hostages in retaliation for the raid. They would lose their leverage on the domestic political scene and their ability to continue to humiliate the US. We have tentative indications, however, that the hostages are being removed from the Embassy. We believe that they may be dispersed throughout Tehran or the country. We expect the government to continue to resist any call to hand over Charge Laingen and his associates to the militants.

The raid will have several domestic results, including:

- temporarily unifying the nation, while encouraging the idea that the Revolution is truly invincible;
- further strengthening the Islamic hardliners, who always said the US could not be trusted and need not be feared;
- reinforcing the awareness that the military must be revitalized (privately, the deep US penetration into Iran must be a source of concern and embarrassment); and
- providing the left with additional propaganda material.

While the raid may provide further impetus for cementing Iranian-Soviet commercial ties, the Iranian leadership will still be very reluctant to rush into a security relationship with Moscow.

It is unlikely under these circumstances that any Iranian leader will be willing to enter into negotiations with the US for some time to come. Instead, the Iranians will sit tight with what they have and await the next move from the US, at least until the parliament considers the hostage issue.

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